



M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Glenn A. Grant, Business Administrator

FROM: Pam Goldstein, Communication Manager *peg*

RE: Municipal Department Cable News Show

DATE: March 17, 1992

I have received a copy of your March 12, 1992 memorandum to the Mayor and agree with your assessment that there is a need for a municipal cable station. This had been discussed with Richard Monteilh, who indicated he would put money into the capital budget once we had an idea about what such an undertaking would cost.

Currently, other cities and towns across America operate their own public information television station. It is my understanding that the new agreement with Cablevision, which took over the Gateway operation, includes a provision for a "government" channel.

As a matter of fact, when Andrea Oates-Martin was hired, it was understood that she would oversee such an operation once it got off the ground. Moreover, she travelled to Pittsburgh with several members of the City Council staff and Councilman Carrino to visit that city's municipal cable station. In addition, I have visited Baltimore's station, which is quite spectacular and has become a prototype for local government information stations.

A government cable station is an excellent vehicle for conveying information and news of what is going on around a city, as well as keeping residents aware of the programs and functions of municipal government. However, in order to maintain its effectiveness, it must remain just that-- a vehicle for information devoid of politics. And, certainly if we can get the positive message of departmental successes across to our citizens, there is no need for politics!

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At the same time, I must emphasize again, the Public Information Office has attempted to work with each department in making its successes and programs known to the public. One of the most positive recent initiatives was a joint undertaking by the Departments of Police and Development which involved the installation of video cameras in the downtown business area. This was done just before Christmas and received wide media attention.

But, we cannot get the word out unless both directors and the individuals they have assigned to work with the department liaisons in the NPIO office let us know what is going on. I personally was not aware that Health and Human Services operates a mini hospital.

There are programs and activities in each department, which might not merit a press conference, but are very deserving of a feature story. And, while we might not be able to use the information immediately, it could be used at a future time. For instance, I often get calls from the media seeking information, expertise or examples that could be part of a bigger story. These are the times I can plug them in to something in one of the departments if I am aware of what is happening. As I indicated before, I would be more than happy to attend one or everyone of your staff meetings in an effort to put together information from the directors that could be used to project a positive image for the City of Newark.

As I have stated, I am in favor of a municipal cable station. New Jersey, as you know, is a print-driven state. Being in the northern part of the state, we in Newark have to compete with New York City for coverage by the local networks. While each of these maintains a bureau in the state, it is staffed by only one news crew, which has to cover all of New Jersey. Southern New Jersey cities receive much better coverage from the Philadelphia stations. Maybe because they only have to cover New Jersey and Pennsylvania, not Long Island, Connecticut, New Jersey and New York!

I would be happy to work with you, the Mayor, the directors, and Cablevision in examining this proposal.

cc: The Hon. Sharpe James, Mayor
Mr. William Celester, Police Director
Ms. Bobi Ruffin, Director, Health and Human Services
Mr. Edwin McLucas, Director, Land Use Control
Mr. Alfred Faiella, Acting Director, Development